

ASPIRA NEWS

National Newsletter of the ASPIRA Association

Volume 9, No. 4

An investment in Latino Youth

Summer 1998

ASPIRA Receives \$800,000 from Ford Foundation for Organizational Development

The Ford Foundation awarded the ASPIRA Association \$800,000 to carry out a comprehensive organizational development initiative. Over the next two years, ASPIRA will implement key components of its National Strategic Plan: a national Strategic Communications Initiative—including expansion of ASPIRA's highly successful youth development model; full development of ASPIRA's national organizational infrastructure—the organization's financial and program management and accountability systems; a National Technology Plan; and expansion of ASPIRA's Public Policy, Re-

search, and Advocacy initiatives. Underlying these initiatives, will be a major thrust to increase access and use of state-of-the-art technology throughout the Association. "We are very pleased with this generous award from the Ford Foundation" said Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, President of ASPIRA, adding, "We are especially pleased that the Foundation recognizes, as we do, that a strong organization, extensive national communications, and technology are key to providing quality programs for our youth. This grant will ensure that ASPIRA enters the 21st century as the premier Latino youth development organization in the country."

ASPIRA of NJ Elects Former Student Rep. as Chair of the Board

Anibal Ramos, former student representative to the Board of Directors of ASPIRA of New Jersey and student representative on the National Board of Directors, was elected Chair of ASPIRA of New Jersey. Mr. Ramos is the youngest chair of the Association and the youngest member of the National Board. Anibal completed a bachelor's degree at Rutgers University last year and works for FOCUS, a service non-profit in Newark, N.J. He recently expressed that his years as an ASPIRANTE and as a member of the National Board, had led to his decision to follow a career in non-profit management. *Bienvenido!*


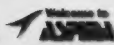
Web Site Launched: www.aspira.org

After months of preparation, the ASPIRA Association officially launched its new website: www.aspira.org. The website includes a wealth of information, which includes ASPIRA's mission, goals, and objectives, and even an on-line copy of ASPIRA's Strategic Plan. It also covers the organization's 37 year history, its governance, programs, research efforts, publications, public policy and advocacy activities, funding sources, staff, and over 300 partners nationwide. There is also a special


section on how to get involved with ASPIRA.

Each of the seven ASPIRA Associates has a web page with detailed information on programs, events, advocacy and staff. There are hundreds of links to other sites of interest, including an extensive list of sources for scholarships and other financial aid, and information on education research and colleges and universities. In all, the site has over 500 links to other organizations and web sites. Please visit our website and send us your feedback at: info@aspira.org.

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An Investment in Latino Youth



ASPIRA's new homepage: www.aspira.org

A Personal Note

Just as this issue of *ASPIRA* News was going to print, Puerto Rico was devastated by hurricane Georges. As of this writing, reports indicate that most of the Island is without power, water, and phone service. Hundreds have lost their homes and hundreds more had their businesses seriously damaged. Thousands remain in shelters and food supplies are becoming scarce, especially in the barrios and rural areas. The island's infrastructure and agriculture were hit hard. Though *ASPIRA* de Puerto Rico suffered some damage, Executive Director, Ms. Hilda Maldonado, reports that *ASPIRA*'s main concern is with the people in communities they serve who lack

food, water, adequate shelter, and building materials needed to begin reconstruction.

Puerto Ricans

all over the mainland—from New York to California—are organizing to help the victims; collecting money, food and other basics. *ASPIRA* is involved in several coalitions to assist in the aid effort.

Puerto Ricans are resilient, brave and hard-working people. As in the past, the island will recover. However, it may take months, even years, to completely overcome the effects of this horrible disaster. Help will be needed for a long time after Georges is no longer on the front pages. Therefore, I urge every reader—to now and in the months to come—to contact either your local coalition, your local *ASPIRA*, or the Red Cross, and

give generously for the people who have suffered so much. And let us not forget the suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Dominican Republic. Our hearts and our prayers are with them as well.

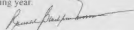
An Exciting Summer

This has been a truly exciting summer. Having finalized the *Strategic Plan for the ASPIRA Association: 1998-2002*—the first time we have developed a plan for the entire Association—we were recently awarded a major grant from the Ford Foundation. The grant will allow us to implement some of the most significant parts of the plan: national strategic communications, significant technology enhancement, and an organizational development initiative. This grant will help set *ASPIRA* firmly as the premier Latino youth development organization in the country.

We just launched our new website at www.aspira.org: a comprehensive source of information on all *ASPIRA* Associates, education, public policy, scholarships and much more. We are very proud of the result and I urge all *Aspirantex*, alumni, and friends to log on. The next step is to utilize the website for our young people to communicate across the country. ***ASPIRA* of Pennsylvania** has opened its new school—the Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School—one of only four to open in Philadelphia. The school will serve 200 young Latinos in Philadelphia's north side. ***ASPIRA* of Florida** is completing work on its first *Youth Sanctuary* in North Miami, a facility that will house an alternative middle school and serve as an after-school safe haven for

Latino youth. ***ASPIRA* of Connecticut** was just recognized for its extraordinary work in reducing the drop-out rate of Latinos in Bridgeport. ***ASPIRA* of New Jersey** has done an exemplary job this year, doubling its budget, expanding the APEX parent involvement program—graduating 140 parents in Jersey City alone—and expanding its reach to Trenton, Patterson, Jersey City and within Newark. It now readies to open four day care facilities. ***ASPIRA* of Illinois** is refurbishing its newly acquired building that will house the Antonia Pantoja Alternative High School and, eventually, *ASPIRA*'s Community College. ***ASPIRA* of New York**'s new entrepreneurship program with Youth Venture will begin the transformation of *ASPIRA*'s 37 year-old leadership program to include youth entrepreneurship and leadership of community organizations, in addition to our well-established public policy leadership program. Our mathematics and science program—the *MAS Academy*—and APEX were both recognized as exemplary programs by the U.S. Department of Education and *ASPIRA* was recognized by the President's Initiative on Race as an exemplary community-based practice.

These are just some of our recent accomplishments. The effort to expand our use of technology, our new leadership programs, the continued expansion of our schools, and our organizational development initiative will make for an even more exciting year.



Ronald Blackburn-Moreno



President's
corner

The 1946 *Méndez v. Westminster* Desegregation Decision: A Little Known Landmark Achievement for the Latino Community

When confronted with closed school doors at the 17th Street School in Westminster, California, Felicitas Méndez, a young mother from Juncos, Puerto Rico, who had lived in California since childhood, and her husband Gonzalo, a Mexican-American, challenged the school district to allow their children to register at the particular school of choice. When school officials demanded their children's transfer to a "Mexican" school, the Méndez couple sued the school district on violation of their civil rights. They also sued on behalf of four other Mexican-American families from other Orange County districts who were confronted with similar discrimination in 1946, eight years before 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Their struggle culminated with the little-known but landmark desegregation case *Méndez v. Westminster* of 1946.

The policy of segregating Latinos in American public schools dates back to the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Before the treaty, — which forever changed U.S.-Mexican relations — Mexican children were enrolled in the same classrooms as White students. However, with the new California state constitution, "first citizenship" was granted only to Mexicans of lighter skin, or individuals who appeared more European, as opposed to those with darker skin or of "Indian" ancestry. Citizenship determinations based on race, and in this case, nationality, crossed over to the public schools. In 1855, the California

state legislature determined that school boards would not be allowed to use public funds to educate non-white children, such as Mexican-Americans with darker skin.

Educators decided to place particular immigrant students in segregated programs supposedly to facilitate their transition into mainstream American society. However, the inferior level of instruction they received was really not to ensure their academic success. According to Robin Harders' and Manuel N. Gómez's article "Separate and Unequal: *Méndez v. Westminster* and De-

segregation in California Schools," Mexican-Americans of darker skin tones received only vocational training to produce blue collar workers who were deemed a necessary source of cheap labor and as non-threatening to white collar America.³ Thus, they would be able to enter mainstream American society, but as a separate and unequal group.

Children of Mexican heritage, specifically those with darker skin, attended segregated "Mexican" schools, that lacked the teaching staff, educational

(continued on page 11)

ASPIRA Collaborates Nationally to Address Education and Promote Employment for Latinos with Disabilities

ASPIRA is actively working in partnership with other organizations and federal agencies to improve the potential for success of our nation's minority population with disabilities. ASPIRA is highly concerned with the strikingly high unemployment and student dropout rates of Latinos with disabilities. Presently, the unemployment rate for Latinos with disabilities between the ages of 21 and 64 is 58.2%, rising to 78.8% for those with severe disabilities. Furthermore, the 30% Hispanic student dropout rate increases drastically for Latinos with disabilities. ASPIRA is striving to enhance opportunities for Latinos with disabilities by training future leaders in this area, working with parents of students with disabilities through its APEX program.



Hilda Crespo, ASPIRA Vice President for Public Policy and Federal Affairs, with Tony Coelho, Chairman of The President's Committee on People with Disabilities, educating public policy makers to promote legislation that will benefit minorities with disabilities, and by providing information, training, and technical assistance.

On March 13, 1998, Presi-

(continued on page 5)

ASPIRA/ETS Dialogue on Preparing Students for the 21st Century

As part of the ASPIRA/Educational Testing Service Collaboration, ASPIRA leadership and over 50 staff met this past April at ETS to discuss a wide range of issues related to preparing Latino students for the 21st Century. According to H. Crespo, ASPIRA's Vice President for Public Policy and Federal Affairs, *"it is clear that ASPIRA has an important role to play in addressing many of the educational challenges ahead for Puerto Rican and Latino youth and that we need to ensure we, as one of the principal national organizations serving our community, are prepared to meet these challenges."*

National Program News

Among the topics discussed were: Access to Postsecondary Education; National Trends in College Admission; Financing a College Education; College Admissions Tests; Counseling Latino Students; Legal Issues Affecting Latino students; Legal Rights of Students; Advocating for Student Rights; Educating Latino Parents as Advocates; and Bilingual Education. Among the speakers were: Diana Phillips, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary, US Department of Education; Diane August, National Research Council; Arnold Mitchem, Executive Director, National Council of Education Opportunity Associations; Anthony Carnesele, Vice President,

ETS; Santa Brown, Executive Director, White House Office of Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans; Alfred Ramirez, Executive Director, Hand in Hand; Joyce Smith, Executive Director National Association for College Admission Counseling; Paul Weckstein, Director, Center for Law and Education; and Juan Figueroa, President, Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund.

Math and Science (MAS) Academy

The *ASPIRA Math and Science (MAS) Academy*, a program to increase the motivation and skills of Latino youth in mathematics and science continues to grow. The Academy, initiated five years ago at ASPIRA of Illinois through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of N.Y., is being implemented at ASPIRA of Florida's Accolade Alternative School with a \$50,000 grant from the American Honda Foundation, and at ASPIRA of New York's Beacon School through a grant from the Annenberg Foundation. The Academy was also implemented in several cities served by ASPIRA of New Jersey (Jersey City, Newark and Camden), with Annenberg support, funding from several New Jersey school districts and a two-year, \$50,000 award by the William Penn Foundation.

Students at the ASPIRA of Florida *MAS Academy* were intensively engaged in math and science through this year's Science Fair at the Accolade School which took place February 21-27, 1998. Students were introduced to scientific research, writing, and reading, as well as presentation skills which were sharpened

for this special event which took place during a week in February. Over eighty students submitted science projects. Judges and science teachers selected forty-two projects for an exhibition that was open to the general public from February 21 to 27. One project was selected to be entered in the Miami-Dade County Science Fair by Odetris Santiago, an eighth grade student. The project was entitled *Chemical Reaction in Rock Candy*.

Summer APEX Activities

APEX Coordinators Yollie Tabales, from ASPIRA of Pennsylvania, and Aida Arroyo from ASPIRA of Puerto Rico, will represent ASPIRA at the 1998 Train-the-Trainer Workshop held by the Maternal and Child Health National Center for Cultural Competence. This is the second year that the conference has been held by MCH-NCCC and ASPIRA's first year as a participant. The conference will address "Culturally Competent Services and Systems: Implications for Children With Special Health Needs" and will be held in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico. Ms. Tabales has been a part of the APEX program for over five years, advancing from APEX graduate to APEX Coordinator. Ms. Arroyo is attending the conference as a local participant and as a representative of the APEX program in Puerto Rico.

Over 130 parents graduated from the APEX program at ASPIRA of New Jersey in a ceremony held on June 30, 1998 at New Jersey City State College. This is the largest graduating class in New Jersey since the program started two years ago. The APEX

Program is now operating at all ASPIRA Associate offices. Over 1,700 parents have graduated from this nationally recognized parent involvement initiative.

NHTSA Agreement Signed

On August 8, 1998 the ASPIRA Association and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) signed a Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC). The purpose of the MOC is to provide a cooperative and constructive framework for the parties to develop collaborative activities and/or initiatives. These initiatives will be directed toward assisting the NHTSA in their national campaign for Increasing Seat Belt Use Nationwide and promoting traffic safety through a comprehensive education campaign. The agreement recognizes the need to provide outreach and leadership opportunities to Hispanic youth, families, and communities.

MAS Academy and ASPIRA Lighthouse Program Recognized

The ASPIRA Math and Science (MAS) Academy and the ASPIRA Lighthouse program at ASPIRA of Connecticut were cited as model after-school programs by the U.S. Department of Education. The DOE designation is linked to the President's initiative 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and based on a recently released report by the President called "Safe & Smart: Making After-School Hours Work for Kids." The ASPIRA programs were recognized as examples illustrating the

potential of quality after-school activities to keep children safe, out of trouble and learning. The President's report is available at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart/>.

National Board Elects Officers/At Large Members

At its last meeting in Washington, ASPIRA's National Board of Directors elected a slate of officers for 1998-99. Ms. Raquel Ortiz was reelected Chair. The other officers are: Mr. William Matos (CT), Vice Chair for Programs; Ms. Myrna Rivera (at-large), Vice Chair for Finance; Ms. Helga Umpierre (PR), Vice Chair for Personnel; Mr. Heriberto Oquendo (Student Representative - NY), Secretary, and Mr. Daniel Agosto (NY), Treasurer. Also reelected as at-large members were Ms. Ortiz, Ms. Rivera and Mr. Héctor Carreño (TX).

Employment from page 3...

dent Clinton signed an Executive Order to Increase Employment of Adults with Disabilities, which mandates a governmentally appointed, interagency Task Force to coordinate and report to the President on self-employment and micro-enterprise strategies for people with disabilities. Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, President of ASPIRA, was appointed by the Chair of the Committee, former congressman Anthony Cohelo, to The Executive Board of this Committee. In a joint meeting between the U.S. Department of Education's Office

of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and the President's Committee, Mr. Blackburn-Moreno delivered the keynote address for the Diversity Outreach Initiative. Hilda Crespo, ASPIRA's Vice President for Public Policy and Federal Affairs, was asked to participate in The Blue Ribbon Panel on Self-Employment, Small Business, and Disability, sponsored by the Committee and The World Institute on Disability. This panel was convened to collect state of the art information from the field in order to fulfill the goals of the Executive Order. In June, 1998 ASPIRA and other advocates provided recommendations to improve Federal programs that assist minority youth with disabilities in their professional development in a meeting on The Successful Transition to Employment for Minority Youth with Disabilities sponsored by the Social Security Administration, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the Institute for Child Health Policy. ASPIRA also participates on the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) Multicultural Taskforce. The purpose of this taskforce is to guide ADD on various programming issues, including funding priorities, expanding outreach and grant opportunities to minority communities. Moreover, during the past five years, ASPIRA has partnered with the Waisman Center, a University-Affiliated Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to revise the ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX) Program to better address the needs of Latino families with disabled children.

ASPIRA of Illinois to Host 30th Anniversary Gala

ASPIRA of Illinois will proudly host its 30th Anniversary Dinner Gala on September 26th at the Palmer House Hotel in Downtown Chicago. The event will commemorate ASPIRA of Illinois' accomplishments and success in an array of educational and youth leadership development programs for the Latino youth of Chicago's communities since 1968. Among other notable figures scheduled to appear are Mayor Richard J. Daley and Miriam Santos, an Aspirante and current City Treasurer. The event will also honor Mirta Ramirez for the visionary and strategic role

she played in establishing and implementing ASPIRA's programs in Chicago and for her ongoing

dedication to the advancement of the Latino community.

ASPIRA - Youth Venture Select First Venturers

New York - ASPIRA and Youth Venture have joined in partnership to create a unique program that encourages and supports Aspirantes as they turn their ideas into real ventures. This program is being piloted at ASPIRA of New York through its Leadership Development Clubs, which are located in 23 schools and two community centers in the City. The ASPIRA - Youth Venture program provides support and technical assistance to teams



Aspirante/Youth Venturer Jeffrey Rodriguez (left) created "Latin Artists."

of Latino youth who are responding to community needs by developing new ventures. The most pivotal criteria for selection include: 1) the proposed venture must somehow respond to a community need, and 2) the young people must be the creators and leaders of their venture ideas.

Latin Artists, the brainchild of 17-year-old high school junior **Jeffrey Rodriguez**, was one of the two ventures chosen.

Jeffrey's team of young artists from his neighborhood will volunteer their time two days a week to teach art classes to the children in his Brooklyn community. Jeffrey's goal is to teach art skills and "to keep these kids off the dangerous streets in my neighborhood. I feel that there are a lot of kids with talent that just need someone to help them out so then they will gain a better view of themselves, learn some skills and hopefully make a little money legally from selling their work." Latin Artists will teach from a studio space in one of his father's commercial buildings and will use the grant of \$1,000 to buy furniture, supplies and equipment for the studio.

Victoria Martinez and **Cassandra Matos**, ages 16 and 15, have grabbed the reins of a massive undertaking whose mission is to establish a computer center for the youth in their community. They've named their venture **Virtual Youth** and plan to supply this much-needed resource by contacting companies for donations of computers and computer hardware and software. They are currently in discussions with their Assemblywoman and several schools concerning securing a space for the center.

Victoria and Cassandra noticed that in their Brooklyn community, youth are at a disadvantage since many of them lack basic computer skills due to the scarcity of computers in their community. With the help of **Jasoma Thiangsonglok**, the group's resident "computer guru," these whiz kids plan to share their knowledge with the young people in their community. "Computers are everywhere," explains Victoria, "and if you don't know how to use one, you'll be left behind."

The group has assembled youth volunteers to teach basic computer and word processing classes, as well as how to create Internet web pages. Virtual Youth will receive a grant of \$1,000 from Youth Venture to get them started with their marketing and project development.

"Proyecto Compay" Honored

ASPIRA de Puerto Rico's *Proyecto Compay*, a program that pairs specially trained couples with families in distress in low income communities in Cataño, Puerto Rico, was recently

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recognized as a national model program by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The program, which takes its name from the traditional relationship between families established through the baptism of a child or "Compadrazgo," reaches families who are going through challenging times to seek assistance from government agencies and other professionals to address their problems. The program has been so successful that the Foundation has developed a video on the program which it will distribute nationally to promote replication of this initiative.

ASPIRA de Puerto Rico TRIO Programs Making a Difference in the Lives of Young People

ASPIRA de Puerto Rico offers a range of activities for students geared toward promoting postsecondary education, while at the same time raising the self-esteem and aspirations of youth. Funded through the US Department of Education, ASPIRA de Puerto Rico's TRIO programs include a Talent Search Program, a Regular Upward Bound Program and a Veteran's Upward Bound Program all of which are highly successful. According to Hilda Maldonado, Executive Director, ASPIRA de Puerto Rico, "combined, these programs serve a total of 2,519 youth—most of whom are low-income potential first generation college students. Moreover, approximately 80 % of the students served go on to postsecondary education." The Talent Search Program, (*Programa Educativo*) serves 2,449 students

from the ages of 11 to 27 from Northeast Puerto Rico, whereas the Regular Upward Bound Program targets 70 students from the ages of 14 to 18 from Carolina. The Veteran's Upward Bound program targets 160 veterans from the entire island of Puerto Rico.

The services offered by these programs include: tutoring and mentoring; counseling—including peer and career development activities—academic advisement and course selection; financial aid assistance workshops; academic preparation workshops; computer assisted instruction, college entrance exams reviews; college campus tours; student leadership retreats; guidance on secondary school reentry and cultural activities. These programs also offer a series of parent meetings to engage them in their children's education and collaborative work with community groups.

In a recent program audit Hilda Crespo, ASPIRA's Vice President for Public Policy and Federal Relations, found that ASPIRA de Puerto Rico's approach in implementing and managing its TRIO Programs is exemplary.

ASPIRA of Florida News

Youth Sanctuary Constructed—ASPIRA of Florida initiated the construction of its first ASPIRA Youth Sanctuary in North Miami. The ASPIRA Youth Sanctuaries are educational safe havens, free from violence, drugs, and gangs, where youth can come off the streets and receive an education, get counseling, be mentored, and

participate in community service.

AIDS Walk—The ASPIRA Beach Clubs participated in this year's "AIDS Walk Miami." They walked 6.2 miles and raised over \$700.00 in pledges. Among the elite were Daisy Fuentes and Gloria Estefan.

Leadership Awards—ASPIRA Palm Beach held its *Second Annual Youth Leadership Award Ceremony* on June 13, 1998. The Leadership Awards were presented in recognition of educational achievement, outstanding community service, dedication and demonstrated leadership ability. There was



The newly constructed Youth Sanctuary in North Miami

strong participation by ASPIRANTES, parents, community leaders, council members and staff. Florida State Representative Addie Greene and Palm Beach County Commissioners Jeff Koons and Alfred Zucaro Jr. were also in attendance.

New School—ASPIRA of Florida will open its fourth alternative middle school in Palm Beach this fall. The organization is currently seeking a permanent site for the school that would be ASPIRA of Florida's third building.

Palm Beach Conference—In May, ASPIRA Palm Beach held

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Appoint a Hispanic to the Supreme Court

For over three years, ASPIRA, together with a host of Latino national organizations, has been advocating for the appointment of a Latino to the U.S. Supreme Court. Presently, six of the Supreme Court Justices are white, non-Hispanic men, two are white, non-Hispanic women, and one is an African American male. Although Latinos make up an estimated 13.5% of the population, they are grossly underrepresented in the judiciary and only a small percentage of law students are Latino. However, Latinos are overrepresented in our nation's judicial caseload. The appointment of a Latino to

the Supreme Court would be significant and a much overdue step in ensuring a Latino voice in our nation's

highest court and towards destroying the negative stereotypes of Latinos in this country. With the probable retirement of Supreme Court Justice J.P. Stevens in the near future, the President will have another opportunity to appoint a Latino to the Supreme Court Justice. The Hispanic Bar Association, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, and others have collected a list of eminently qualified Latino candidates. ASPIRA has explicitly endorsed **Judge José Cabranes**—an *Aspirante*, law professor and trustee at Yale University and currently an appeals court judge—for the nomination. Judge Cabranes was also on the President's "short list" the last

time he appointed a Supreme Court Justice.

We urge the President not to play the game of pitting one Latino group against another as an excuse not to appoint a Latino. A Latino on the Supreme Court is long overdue. ■

Bilingual Education - H.R.

3892, "The English Language Fluency Act," which passed in The House on September 10th, proposes to drastically curtail bilingual education programs. This legislation would dismantle the current structure of federal funding for bilingual education and replace it with a series of state block grants. Unlike present funding, these block grants do not include performance standards, nor do they target funds to schools with the most need. For Latino students with limited proficiency in English, this legislation places them at a severe educational disadvantage.

The provisions of this bill would do away with all existing "consent decrees" between states and the U.S. Department of Education regarding bilingual education, and would require congressional approval for consent decrees in the future. In addition, it allows only three years for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students to master English; ends all current Title VII grants after one year; eliminates minimum grants to state departments of education; eliminates funds to states that exempt LEP students from standardized achievement tests in English; restricts research dealing with English language acquisition; and eliminates the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

The Hispanic Education Initiative - In February the

Clinton Administration announced a \$600 million Hispanic Education Action Plan to address the egregious disparities between Latino and Anglo students. The plan includes: \$393 million to strengthen basic reading and math skills; \$66 million to train 20,000 teachers to teach students English and help adults learn English; \$30 million to transform schools with high dropout rates; \$69 million to prepare disadvantaged youth for success in college; and \$60 million to improve education programs for migrant youth and adults. The House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, however, decided to reduce funding substantially for this initiative.

"E-Rate" Curtailed - The

E-Rate program is the provision in the 1996 Telecommunications Act that offers discounted rates for advanced services, such as Internet access, to schools and libraries in disadvantaged communities. The program is of utmost importance since it provides children in underprivileged areas with access to advanced technology. Presently, only 27% of the classrooms in the United States are connected to the Internet, a figure that drops to a meager 13% in poor, minority school districts. However, many critics in Congress have voiced opposition to the E-Rate program since it is paid through a surcharge on consumer monthly bills. Consequently, funding was cut by nearly half and only \$1.28 billion was disbursed this year, as opposed to the requested \$2.02 bil-

Policy update

tion.

School Modernization Bill

As part of the FY 99 budget request, President Clinton proposed a \$22 billion initiative to build, renovate and modernize 5,000 public schools. The plan calls for federal tax credits to pay interest on two types of bonds: School Modernization Bonds and Qualified Zone Academy Bonds. The measure, taken up by the Senate (S. 1708), would authorize \$9.7 billion for school repair and construction bonds in fiscal 1999 for after-school programs, as well as \$3.2 billion over five years for school technology, and \$1.5 billion over five years for education opportunity grants.

Higher Education Act Reauthorization - H.R. 6 would reauthorize all Higher Education Act programs—including TRIO Programs—which expire September 30, but received an automatic one-year extension. This legislation would cut interest rates on student loans by 0.8% through a subsidy to lenders. Additionally, the bill would eliminate the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The Senate version, S. 1882, proposes not only to cut interest rates to the same level as the House bill, but would penalize colleges and universities that do not participate in a proposed mandatory cost survey.

The Health Professions Education Partnerships Act of 1998 - The Senate's S. 1754, The Health Professions Education Partnerships Act of 1998, amends the Public Health Service Act to consolidate and reauthorize health professions and minority and disadvantaged health education programs. The measure calls

for grants to be made to designated health professions schools to assist them in supporting educational programs for under-represented minorities. In addition to other objectives, these grants must develop a large applicant pool through linkages with institutions of higher education, local school districts, and other community-based entities, and establish an education pipeline for health profession careers; establish, strengthen or expand programs to enhance the academic performance of under-represented minority students attending the school; facilitate faculty and student research on health issues particularly affecting under-represented minority groups, including research on issues relating to the delivery of health care, and carry out a program to train students of the school in providing health services to a significant number of under-represented minority individuals through training provided to such students at community-based health facilities.

Class size - The President has proposed a \$12 billion initiative over seven years to help local schools provide small classes with well-prepared teachers in early elementary school. On June 24, legislation was introduced in the Senate (S. 2209) and referred to the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. The bill would authorize \$7.3 billion over five years to reduce class size in the early grades by helping school districts nationwide hire 100,000 new teachers and provide for teacher professional development.

School Gun Safety - H.R. 4073 would allocate \$50 million

in competitive grants to local education agencies for school programs and partnerships involving teachers, students, parents and administrators in reducing gun incidents in public elementary and secondary schools. In addition, it would assist parents in educating children about gun safety and violence prevention; provide public school staff and administrators with professional development; provide technical assistance for school psychologists and counselors; improve security on public school campuses; and assist schools in developing crisis response plans. Another measure just introduced, H.R. 4146, and its parallel in the Senate, S. 2169, would require states to issue a 72-hour holding period for any student caught bringing a gun to school.

Fiscal 1999 Appropriations - The House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee spending initiative for education programs would provide a \$1.1 billion increase from fiscal 1998. The plan includes a policy provision that would let school staff unilaterally move "violent" disabled students, as well as those who commit weapon and drug offenses, to alternative settings for unlimited periods. This measure falls about \$650 million short of President Clinton's \$31.2 billion request for Education Department discretionary spending. The House Appropriations Committee's spending bill for independent agencies would eliminate the AmeriCorps national service program. An agricultural spending panel's bill would fund

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K-12 MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS!

Are you an outstanding K-12 mathematics or science teacher? Do you implement new, standards-based curricula in your classroom? Do you engage your students in active, hands-on learning?

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) Program, run by the National Science Foundation (NSF), is soliciting entries for its 1999 awards cycle. Two hundred sixteen teachers—four per state and per U.S. jurisdiction*—will be awarded.

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching includes:

- ★ a \$7,500 National Science Foundation grant to the awardee's school;
- ★ generous educational gifts from private sector and professional organization donors; and
- ★ recognition events in Washington, D.C.; including awards ceremonies, Presidential Citations, workshops, and meetings with government and education leaders.



The program recognizes teachers from all locations and all underrepresented minority groups. The awards are given in the categories of elementary mathematics, elementary science, secondary mathematics, and secondary science.

To apply, you must complete an application and prepare materials for review by a selection committee. Brochures with application request forms are available from your mathematics or science State/Jurisdiction Coordinator or from the following address:



NSF/PAEMST

Room 885, 4201 Wilson Boulevard,
Arlington, VA 22230.

To learn more about the PAEMST program, or to download applications, please visit our homepage at:

<http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/ESIE/awards/core.htm>

The deadline for all completed teacher application packets is February 28, 1999.

* Eligible jurisdictions include Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, the Department of Defense Dependence Schools, and the following U.S. Territories as a group: American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands.

Mendez vs. Westminster from page 3...

materials or curriculum, and infrastructure that were available in "White" schools.

Civil rights attorney, David Marcus, argued the *Mendez* case on individual civil rights grounds because students forced to enroll in "Mexican" schools were not given adequate language tests before enrollment. More importantly, he argued, educational segregation based on national origin violated the 14th and 15th amendments of the U.S. Constitution. In *Mendez v. Westminster*, the court sided with the five Mexican-American families because the plaintiffs had proven that the schools in the Orange County districts of Westminster, Garden Grove, Santa Ana and El Modena failed to provide an equal education, hence, equal protection of the law. In addition, it ruled that a segregated school system fostered the creation of inferior schools and caused the development of inferiority complexes and tension between White and Mexican-American students and their parents. The presiding judge also ruled that segregating students on the ba-

sis of national origin violates the ultimate goal of public education—to uphold social equality and ensure "equal protection under the law." This ruling would stand on appeal and later, segregation in the California public school system was officially banned.

The *Mendez v. Westminster* case was the first to oppose the establishment of "separate but equal" facilities, called for by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court case in 1896. The ruling stated specifically that educational segregation based on nationality inhibited efforts to provide equal educational facilities to all public school children.

Brown v. the Board of Education officially overturned the doctrine of "separate but equal" within the realm of national public education. It was, nevertheless, the determination of two Latinos in California to obtain a better education for their children, Felicitas and Gonzalo Méndez, that initiated the long legal and political struggles to break down the barriers of inequality in education in the United States. ■

Published in *A Family Changes History: Méndez v. Westminster's Fifteenth Anniversary Commemorative*, a community service project of the University of California, Irvine, Division of Student Services, Office of the Vice Chancellor. This publication was also prepared for the Harvard Educational Review forum co-sponsored by UCI, "150 Years of Chicano/Chicana Education, 1848-1998," April 25, 1998.

New Grants The National Office received several new program grants over the past few months. These include:

- Corporation for National Service - \$540,000 for AmeriCorps Prog.
- Ford Foundation (NCAS) - \$67,000 for ASPIRA's advocacy work
- W.R. Hearst Foundation - \$50,000 for the APEX Program
- Annenberg Foundation - \$50,000 for the MAS Academy
- Matsushita (Panasonic) Foundation - \$35,000 for the MAS Academy
- Hewlett Foundation - \$25,000 for a Charter School in Pennsylvania
- U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services - \$20,000 as part of the ASPIRA/HHS Agreement

Florida News from page 7...

its Second Annual *Muchachos* Conference. The conference dealt with issues of substance abuse, gangs and attitudes, and male roles and responsibilities. Young men from ASPIRA Palm Beach and Greater Miami and the Beaches were in attendance as well as community leaders and members of the media.

ASPIRA Palm Beach continued leadership development of Latino and other minority youth by involving them in a nation wide live radio program, Teen Live Wire. Additionally, ASPIRANTES viewed the play *Paul Robeson*, that addressed segregation and racial issues.



Aspirante Rodolfo Rodriguez thanks guest speaker Alvin Marshall with a plaque of appreciation at the Florida Muchachos conference. Mr. Marshall spoke on alternatives to gangs.

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child nutrition programs at \$9.2 billion, an increase from \$7.8 billion in 1997 - including \$5.4 billion for the School Lunch Program and nearly \$1.4 billion for the School Breakfast Program.

Head Start - Senate bill S. 2183 would double the number of Head Start participants by increasing funds set aside from 5 percent to 10 percent for the Early Head Start Program in 2002. This bill was incorporated as an amendment to S. 2206, reauthorizing Health and Human Services Department programs and was passed by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

The ASPIRA Association, Inc. is the only national nonprofit organization devoted solely to serving Puerto Rican and other Latino youth through leadership development and education. ASPIRA takes its name from the Spanish verb *aspirar*, "to aspire." Since 1961, ASPIRA has pursued its mission of empowering the Latino community through the development of its youth. All of ASPIRA's goals and activities spring from one basic belief: Puerto Ricans and Latinos have the collective potential to move their community forward.

With offices in six states and Puerto Rico, and a budget of over \$16 million per year, ASPIRA's 400 full-time staff members and over 1,000 volunteers serve 25,000 youth and their families each year. The young leaders we serve are our "Aspirantes," 90% of whom go on to higher education. Most mainland Puerto Rican leaders today—in business, education, government and other professions—are the product of the encouragement ASPIRA offered during their adolescence.

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